



Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo (right) helped host a recent INL visit from Utah Sen. Bob Bennett (left), who will soon be the ranking Republican on the committee that allocates Department of Energy funding.

## Utah senator visits Idaho National Laboratory

by Glen Tait, *INL Communications*

On July 2, Sen. Bob Bennett of Utah visited to Idaho Falls to learn about Idaho National Laboratory. Bennett, who was accompanied by his chief of staff, Mary Jane Collipriest, made the trip at the request of Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo. Crapo hosted the daylong visit along with aides Leslie Huddleston and Lindsay Nothern.

Bennett first met with Beth Sellers, manager of the DOE Idaho Operations Office. He then delivered a wide-ranging speech at an Idaho Falls City Club luncheon, and answered questions from the audience. At the City Club, Bennett explained that, with the upcoming retirement of Sen. Pete Domenici, he would be taking over the top Republican spot on the subcommittee that allocates funding for the Department of Energy. He has begun to visit DOE labs to prepare for this new responsibility. In his remarks at the City Club, Bennett also emphasized the importance of technology innovation and energy resources in the West as key to solving the nation's energy challenges.

After the City Club speech, Bennett and Crapo received briefings on the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project and the Idaho Cleanup Project. The senators then turned their focus to INL issues, and Laboratory Director John Grossenbacher gave the senators an overview of how INL fits in the DOE national lab system. Grossenbacher described INL's leadership role in nuclear energy and how its unique capabilities make it the preferred choice for testing and demonstrating energy and national security systems.

Dr. Kathy McCarthy, deputy associate laboratory director for Nuclear Science and Technology, led a discussion about INL's role in programs such as the Next Generation Nuclear Plant (NGNP), the Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative and the effort to extend the life of existing nuclear reactors. Bennett was particularly interested in how the NGNP could produce electricity and hydrogen at the same time. Bennett and Crapo asked questions about the economic competitiveness and safety features of advanced reactors and impediments to their deployment.

INL Associate Laboratory Director for National and Homeland Security Dr. K.P. Ananth then gave the senators a description of the lab's national and homeland security programs. As the former chairman of the Senate committee that coordinated responses to the Y2K challenges, Bennett was particularly interested in cyber threats to the nation's infrastructure. Ananth discussed INL programs with government and industry to address this threat.

The senators and their staffs then traveled to the Bonneville County Technology Center to tour the hydrogen production lab. Dr. Bill Rogers, associate laboratory director for Energy and Environmental Science and Technology, explained how INL's hybrid energy systems might help tap the vast energy resources in the Intermountain West. Rogers and INL researcher Steve Herring described the High Temperature Electrolytic process INL is demonstrating to produce hydrogen. Three representatives from Ceramtec, a Utah-based company that is partnered with INL in the hydrogen production effort, were on hand for this presentation.

Earlier in the day, Bennett posed questions about the hybrid vehicle he drives. In response, Energy Storage and Transportation Systems Manager Tim Murphy discussed the progress in development of extended-life batteries and how these batteries are improving the performance of electric vehicles. Crapo thanked Murphy for his participation in a radio show Crapo had hosted the day before in Boise.

Riding in the INL Yellow Bus on the way to the airport, Bennett expressed his commitment to come back to Idaho to tour the lab facilities on the desert. He expressed his support for the important work at the lab and thanked Crapo and Grossenbacher for their hospitality.

View news coverage of the event from [KIFI Local News 8](#), [KIDK 3 Eyewitness News](#) and the [Idaho Falls Post Register](#).

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